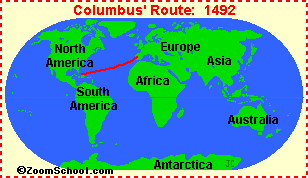
**Christopher Columbus**

Christopher Columbus was born in Genoa, Italy in 1451 to Domenico Columbo, a wool weaver. He worked for his Father until he was 22 then set out to follow his own dream to become a sea captain. Many of his fellow Genoese had prospered in Lisbon under the Portuguese flag as Captains of sailing ships and he longed to join their ranks. It was to this end that Columbus began to educate himself learning to read and speak Portuguese, Castilian and Latin. He read many geography books, and studied the bible and the writings of Marco Polo, gathering all the information he could about the world. He became a chart maker himself and because of these studies became convinced that the world was spherical, round instead of flat. This belief later became the basis for his quest of finding a shorter route to Asia.

Asia offered many goods Europeans craved but traveling East to get them was difficult and dangerous.   However, it was with these countries of the EAST, India, China, Japan, and the East Indies, that Europeans longed to trade in greater volume. It was for this reason that a sea route around the tip of Africa to the EAST Indies and Asia was sought.  Columbus was just one of many, explorers and tradesmen trying to find such a route.

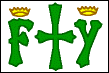
Portugal deemed, " The greatest seafaring nation in the world," due in large measure to the discoveries, exploits and sponsorship of it’s prince, nicknamed "Henry the Navigator," seemed the most likely nation to support Columbus's dream of finding that shorter route to the EAST. So, it was no surprise that later, he would chose to approach Portugal's King John II for his support of his expedition.

In 1479 Columbus married Dona Felipa Perestrello, whose father had been one of Prince Henry The Navigator's captains. His wife's social rank opened doors for Columbus. And using his Father in laws collection of charts and documents he gained more knowledge of Portuguese discoveries and plans. In 1481 he entered the service of King John II of Portugal and voyaged to the Gold Coast of Africa.  
  Columbus wanted to discover the much sought for route to the EAST that would open up a lucrative trade.  He believed there was a better way to find it then traveling around the tip of AFRICA. He believed by sailing west 3000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean that he would come full circle and end up in Asia without having to go south and east. He thought he would sail right into these countries never dreaming he would land on a whole new continent and lay claim to a whole new world.

In 1484 Columbus applied for ships and men from King John II of Portugal. He was refused and then his proposal was reconsidered. However, the final rejection of his proposal came when Bartholomew Diaz discovered the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa. He had found an eastern sea route to India. The Portuguese were no longer interested in an unproven western route. Columbus was denied once again and returned to Spain.

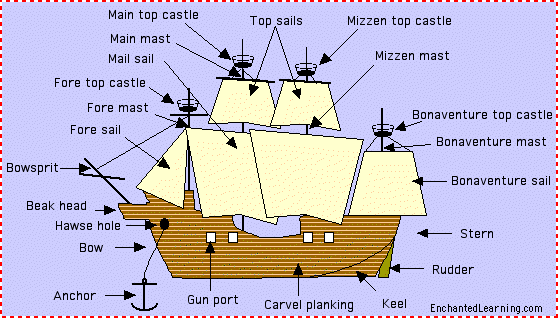
He finally convinced the King and Queen of Spain to finance him and under the Spanish flag from Palos, Harbor in Spain with three ships the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria set sail at dawn on August 3, 1492. However problems with the Nina and the Pinta necessitated a one month delay in the Canary Islands. He then set sail again on September 3, 1492 and thirty-three days later at 2:00 a.m. on October 12, 1492,  Rodrigo de Triana, a seaman aboard the *Pinta, spotted land.*  
  Columbus actually had landed among the Bahamas Islands on an island today called Watling Island, but the inhabitants then called it Guanahani Island. Columbus named this land San Salvador, claiming it in the name of Spain. This NEW World would lead to the settlement by Europeans of the continents of North and South America.

**Conditions on the Christopher Columbus ships would have been very basic. Food provisions would have included bread, beer, hard biscuits, fish and salted meat. The Captain would have had some private stores, which might include wine.**

* **Facts about Christopher Columbus Ships: How fast were the ships? The Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria probably covered a distance of about 100 miles per day**
* **The ships carried about 120 men in total**
* **There was a lack of proper sanitation**
* **Large ships would have carried a surgeon or doctor**
* **One of the worst health problems on board the three Christopher Columbus Ships would have been scurvy**
* **Fresh livestock included pigs and chickens were part of the ships provisions**
* **Meat would have been preserved by being salted**
* **Cooking was done in a fire box located on decks in the bow of the ship, Cooking pots or cauldrons would be suspended from a bar**
* **The seamen would sleep in cramped and damp conditions on the deck of the ships**

**Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) made a total of four trips to the New World and South America during the years 1492-1504**

* **The First Trip:**  
  On his first trip, Columbus led an expedition with three ships, and about 90 crewmembers. They were met by the local Taino Indians, many of whom were captured by Columbus' men and later sold into slavery. Columbus thought he had made it to Asia, and called this area the Indies, and called its inhabitants Indians. While exploring the islands in the area and looking for gold to loot, Columbus' men traveled to the islands of Hispaniola (now divided into Haiti and the Dominican Republic), Cuba, and many other smaller islands. On the return trip, the Santa Maria was wrecked and the captain of the Pinta sailed off on his own to try to beat Columbus back. Columbus returned to Spain in the Nina, arriving on March 15, 1493.
* **The Second Trip:**  
  On a second, larger expedition (Sept. 25, 1493-June 11, 1496), sailed with 17 ships and 1,200 to 1,500 men to find gold and capture Indians as slaves in the Indies. Columbus established a base in Hispaniola and sailed around Hispaniola and along the length of southern Cuba. He spotted and named the island of Dominica on November 3, 1493.
* **The Third Trip:**  
  On a third expedition (May 30, 1498-October 1500), Columbus sailed farther south, to Trinidad and Venezuela (including the mouth of the Orinoco River). Columbus was the first European since the Viking [Leif Ericsson](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/explorers/indexe.shtml#Ericsson) to set foot on the mainland of America.
* **The Fourth Trip:**  
  On his fourth and last expedition (May 9, 1502-Nov. 7, 1504), Columbus sailed to Mexico, Honduras and Panama (in Central America) and Santiago (Jamaica). Columbus is buried in eastern Hispaniola (now called the Dominican Republic).

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**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Christopher Columbus**

Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Why was Portugal deemed, " The greatest seafaring nation in the world?"
2. **Although Christopher Columbus was born in Genoa, a seaport town in Italy, why did he sail under the flag of Spain?**
3. Columbus marrying his wife “opened doors” for him. Explain what this phrase means. How did marrying his wife help lead to his voyages?
4. **In 1492, Columbus set sail West across the Atlantic Ocean in search of a new trade route to the Far East or Asia. Where did he actually end up?**
5. **Before steam power, ocean travel was slow and difficult. The** Niña**, the** Pinta**, and the** Santa Maria **sailed an average of how many miles per day?**
6. **Explain what the conditions were like on the the** Niña**, the** Pinta**, and the** Santa Maria while it sailed to the Americas.